(b) The corresponding cost of exploration in other countries will vary from country to country depending on the parametres given in answer to part (a) of the question.

हिमाचल प्रदेश में खनिज भंडार

610. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह** : क्या खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) हिमाचल प्रदेश में इस समय केन्द्र सरकार के निरीक्षण में किन-किन स्थानों पर कौन-कौन सी धातुओं का खनन कार्य चल रहा है ;

(ख) हिमाचल प्रदेश में कुल्लु जिले की गड़सा घाटी में जहां ताम्बे के प्रचुर भंडार पाये गए है, खनन कार्य की अद्यतन स्थिति क्या है ;

(ग) क्या यह सच है कि उपर्युक्त ताम्बे की खान का सड़क द्वारा सम्पर्क न होने के कारण वहां खनन कार्य में और आवश्यक भारी मशीनरी आदि पहुंचाने में कठिनाइयां पेश आ रही है ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो सरकार ने खनन कार्य में विलम्ब को दूर करने के लिये क्या कदम उठाये है ?

खान मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बलराम सिंह यादव) : (क) से (ग) हिमाचल प्रदेश ; वाणिज्यिक आधार पर खनिजों के विदोहन में इस समय कोई केन्द्र सरकारी एजेंसी नहीं लगी हुई है। तथापि, भारतीय भूवैज्ञानिक सर्वेक्षण कार्यालय और सर्वेक्षण कार्य में लगा हुआ है। उनके द्वारा किए गए सर्वेक्षण के फलस्वरूप, कुल्लु जिले के अंतर्गत गरसा घाटी में तांबे के भंडारों का पता लगा है। इस क्षेत्र में गवेषण और सर्वेक्षण कार्य चल रहा है, किन्तु गरसा से नारोल तक सड़क बहुत खराब है।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

611. (Transferred to 12th May, 1993

Production of Steel

612. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:
SHRI IQBAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have planned a substantial increase in steel production in the Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plans in order to meet the growing demands of the engineering industry:

(b) if os, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to adopt the latest technology for growth and development of furnaces industry; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to implement such proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The projected demand for finished steel in 1996-97, the terminal year of the Eighth Five Year Plan, is 25 million tonnes (including 2.5 million tonnes for export). The production in that year is projected at 24.09 million tonnes against the production of 15.10 million tonnes (provisional) during 1992-93.

Government have taken several steps for increase in steel production during the Eighth Five Year Plan. These include:

(1) Modernisation and expansion of the public sector integrated steel plants.

(2) Delicensing and deregulation of the iron and steel industry to encourage private sector investment.

(3) Reduction of customs duty on project imports and reduction of minimum interest rate on commercial advances in the Budget

for 1993-94 to improve the viability of industrial projects including iron and steel projects.

(4) Reduction of customs duty on raw materials such as refractories and ferro alloys to reduce production costs of steel.

The impact of these measures will also continue into the Ninth Five Year Plan.

(c) and (d) In a study conducted by Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited (MECON) various measures were identified for technological upgradation of electric arc furnace units in the country. These include introduction of high power transformers, oxygen assisted melting, secondary refining, continuous casting etc. Since electric are furnace units are mostly in the private sector, the initiative for technological upgradation has to come from the units themselves. To facilitate import of technology, iron and steel industry has been included in the list of high priority industries. This enables iron and steel units to freely import technology within certain specified norms.

Production cost of Steel

613. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to introduce a package of measures aimed at reducing the capital and production costs of steel; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The budget proposals for 1993-94 contain measures aimed at reducing the capital & production costs of industrial projects including steel plants. These include lowering of customs duty on project imports and reduction of minimum interest rate on commercial advances. Besides, reduction of customs duty on imported raw materials & consumables like pig iron, ferrow-alloys, refractories, graphite electrodes etc. will also reduce the production costs of steel.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

614. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a circular was issued during last November by the Management of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in regard to salaries of employees; and

(b) if so what are the detalls thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Management of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has reported that keeping in view its difficult financial position, there was apprehension about some delay in the payment of salaries of the employees for the month of November, 1992. As a precautionary measure and in accordance with the provisions of payment of Wages Act, the Management had addressed the concerned authorities. It was also brought to the notice of the recognised union of employees and also displayed on the Notice Board. The salaries for the month of November, 1992 were however disbursed on the due date.

Modernisation of IISCO

615. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision regarding modernisation of Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited either by private parties or by Government itself;